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LETTER DATED 28 NOVEMBER 1994 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF GEORGIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Upon instructions of my Government, I have the honour to transmit herewith a copy of the statement of the Chairman of the Parliament, Head of State of the Republic of Georgia, His Excellency Mr. Eduard Shevardnadze, issued on 28 November 1994.

The newest developments in Abkhazia, Republic of Georgia, connected with the adoption by the Abkhaz separatists of a new constitution of Abkhazia, which declares Abkhazia as a sovereign republic and a subject of international law, clearly demonstrate that the present Abkhaz leadership has completely ignored the intensive, peaceful efforts of the United Nations directed towards the comprehensive political solution to the conflict.

It is becoming obvious that the Abkhaz authorities have chosen a very dangerous way of settling the existing problems.

My Government expresses its deepest concern with the recent events that have taken place in Abkhazia, Republic of Georgia, and kindly requests the Security Council to consider and evaluate the current situation in the region at its special meeting and to adopt the appropriate measures in this regard.

I would highly appreciate it if the enclosed statement could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Peter CHKHEIDZE
Ambassador Extraordinary
and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative

Annex

[Original: English and Russian]

Statement by the Head of State of the Republic of Georgia, issued on 28 November 1994

On 26 November 1994, a new constitution of Abkhazia was adopted declaring it to be a sovereign republic and a subject of international law. Vadislav Ardzinba was "elected" president of this self-styled republic. The decision on the status of Abkhazia, the adoption of a constitution, the reorganization of the power structure and the declaration of independence have all been endorsed by a "parliament" from which representatives of the Georgian population as well as those of other nationalities who reside in Abkhazia have been driven away, thereby ignoring the opinion and fair representation of the vast majority of the multinational population of Abkhazia.

As was noted in the memorandum of the Georgian delegation to the Geneva negotiations this past 15-18 November, the Abkhaz side and the reactionary forces supporting them have consistently engaged in obstructing the process of achieving a constructive resolution of the conflict. They continue these obstructionist tactics and flagrantly neglect to fulfil their heretofore agreed-upon obligations while persistently attempting to legitimatize a reactionary political regime guilty of committing genocide and ethnic cleansing against Abkhazia's Georgian population.

These are the facts regarding the campaign of genocide and ethnic cleansing carried out against the Georgian population: more than 6,000 people have perished - political figures, scientific and cultural personalities, journalists, physicians and teachers - brutally executed, and in many cases tortured, while of the more than 200,000 Georgians who escaped, many women, children and elderly died of exposure and hunger, remaining forever behind on the mountain paths over which they were forced to flee.

In their attempt to forcibly alter the demographic composition of Abkhazia by the execution or expulsion of over half of the indigenous population - mostly Georgians - and by their subsequent declaration of independence in blatant disregard of the opinion of the multinational population of the region, the Abkhaz separatists and the forces which support them are waging a war which has proved to be a tragedy not only for Georgians, but for the Abkhaz as well. Many ethnic Abkhaz have fled the region alongside members of other ethnic groups, refusing to be associated with this criminal regime. Today, more than four fifths of the population of the Abkhaz Autonomous Republic remain beyond its borders.

In blatant violation of the Security Council resolutions and the Quadripartite Agreement signed by the Abkhaz party themselves, the separatists have done all within their power to prevent the return of the displaced because their repatriation would hinder plans for legitimatizing this regime and prevent the so-called referendum in support of this self-styled independence.

The Security Council resolutions, decisions made by the supreme bodies of both the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and statements of the President and the Government of the Russian Federation categorically reject any attempt to forcibly redraw the State borders of the Republic of Georgia.

In the Secretary-General's report of 3 May 1994, it is stated "that the Abkhaz side was made to clearly understand that independence acquired by the force of arms is unacceptable to the international community".

There is no justification, theoretical or otherwise, for the separatists' attempt to declare the creation of an independent State since this would openly encourage armed conflict within the boundaries of democratic States - Members of the United Nations - carried out by similar groups of political adventurists which would throw the contemporary international community into chaos and the world into a stage for multiple armed conflicts.

These newest developments in Abkhazia demonstrate that it is not an ethnically motivated conflict which is taking place, but rather deft manipulation of the varied ethnic sentiments of the people by political adventurists aspiring to realize their ambitions.

History is witness to many cases when such policy has necessarily ended in miserable failure and those responsible had to answer for it. This will be the case here as well.

The Abkhaz separatists and the forces supporting them, having been convinced that they will not be able to legitimatize their reactionary aggressive regime through the process of negotiating a comprehensive resolution of the conflict in Abkhazia, opted to destroy the negotiations altogether, knowing full well that the Republic of Georgia will not conduct negotiations with the Abkhaz side as though they were an independent State and a subject of international law. This position is shared by all parties to the negotiation process.

The most recent activities of the Abkhaz separatists are an overt challenge to the international community, ruling out the possibility of peaceful resolution and bringing to naught the efforts of all parties involved in the process of negotiating a comprehensive political settlement of the conflict.

The Republic of Georgia appeals to the Security Council, CSCE and the CIS, primarily the Government of the Russian Federation, to react without delay to these new and irresponsibly provocative steps taken by the aggressive separatists, and to take significant measures, including the imposition of sanctions, consistent with the Charter of the United Nations and the basic documents of the CSCE and CIS, to address this situation.

(Signed) Eduard SHEVARDNADZE